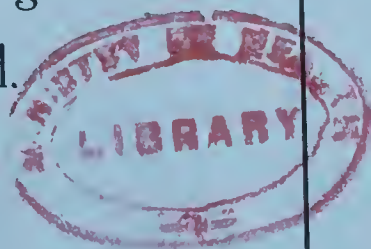


Ripon and Pateley Bridge Rural
District Council.



WEST RIDING COUNTY COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1944.

Ripon and Pateley Bridge Rural
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DISTRICT COUNCIL.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1944.**

**PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL
AUTHORITY.**

Medical Officers of Health :

CHARLES ASHLEY FLINTOFF, L.R.C.P. (Lond.) M.R.C.S.
(Eng.)

WILLIAM SAMUEL WATERHOUSE, M.B., Ch.B.

Chief Sanitary Inspector :

JOHN KENNERLEY WALTON, Cert. R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Diploma of the Royal Sanitary Institute for Inspector
of Nuisances (1920) and Inspector of Meat and Other
Foods (1920).

Additional Sanitary Inspectors :

*WALLACE TODD BECKWITH, Cert. S.I.B., A.R. San. I.,
M.S.I.A.

Diploma of R.S.I. and S.I.J.E.B. Sanitary Inspector.
Diploma of R.S.I. Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.

*WILLIAM ERIC WIGGLESWORTH, Cert. S.I.B., A.R. San. I.,
M.S.I.A.

Diploma of R.S.I. and S.I.J.E.B. Sanitary Inspector.

FRANCIS JOSEPH THOMPSON, Cert. S.I.B., M.R. San. I.,
M.S.I.A.

Diploma of R.S.I. and S.I.J.E.B. Sanitary Inspector
(1930).

Diploma of R.S.I. Inspector of Meat and Other Foods
(1940).

* *On active service with His Majesty's Forces overseas.*

Mill House,
PATELEY BRIDGE,
31st December, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members of the Ripon and
Pateley Bridge Rural District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you my annual Report upon the health of the District for the year 1944. It is with great pleasure that I am again able to tell you that your District is fortunate in having had no serious epidemic of disease and that the health of the inhabitants, in comparison with that of the country generally, is good. Unfortunately many people associate the word "health" with the absence of the more epidemic infectious diseases which may have nothing like such serious consequences as some which insidiously undermine health and render subjects not only more or less a burden on the community but in some instances constitute reservoirs of infection to those with whom they come in contact. The onset of these diseases is not heralded by a brilliant rash or a sudden fit of vomiting or headache, or they would receive greater attention, and usually it is not until the sufferers find that their condition interferes with wage earning that they repair, often too late to be made anything like fit again, to the Doctor, when the story of many months, or even years, of progressive disease is unfolded. Most of these diseases are preventable, and, if treated in the early stages, curable, but there is a pronounced reticence in voluntarily attending for medical examination for what may seem to be minor ailments. We have not yet so far progressed as to have periodical medical examination made generally compulsory. Our people have taken many years to become accustomed to having their children medically examined at school. Many still quibble at having to provide the necessary spectacles, the small sum of money for attention to teeth, and they shy at having to allow their children to undergo essential minor operations. As they appear to have so little regard for the less noticeable deficiencies in the health of the juveniles, it is reasonable to suppose that they have still less regard

for their own. It is doubtful if it is right that anyone should be allowed to permit themselves or those in their charge to become so debilitated as to become a liability to the State which they undoubtedly are if a robust state of health and full working capacity are not maintained. It will be noticed that these remarks do not apply to immunisation against diphtheria, which almost everyone having children of school age, or less, has availed themselves of, but here again diphtheria is an epidemic disease with very prominent symptoms and which may soon result in death.

We pride ourselves upon being a progressive Local Authority under the aegis of a most progressive County Council, and it is our duty to see that all preventable diseases are prevented. I believe that when we become sufficiently educated at least 75 per centum of the cases of diseases now suffered can be eliminated, but we are a race which is slow of thought, and, therefore, modest in our evolutionary trends, and are more or less committed to the view that what is customary is moral.

It may be said of some diseases that we do not yet fully know the cause or causes of them. True, therefore, we must remove from our lives all those things which we know to be harmful to us in the event that they may be the vehicles, or the causative agents, of obscure diseases. Common colds, rheumatic ailments, tuberculosis, cancer and most other diseases are productive of pain and poverty, and it is true that we yet have with us many environmental conditions which are conducive to the incidence of disease. Polluted water or that so exposed to pollution as to be incapable of supervision, chemically unsuitable water, unsuitable diet, food exposed to dirt and contagion, dirty bodies (due usually to lack of water, heating arrangements and baths), cold, damp and badly arranged houses with smoky chimneys and vitiated atmosphere, shoddy and unsuitable boots and clothing, and many other seemingly innocent conditions exist in varying degrees to contribute their quota to the attack upon health. We are fortunate in that we have with us in this District very few parasitic insects which prevent comfortable and refreshing sleep, but many children are seen roaming about at night when they should be having the much-needed sleep.

With all our resentment of "controls," which have been so considerably added to in the war period, we must submit to control of all those things which uncontrolled are inimical to the nation's health for there is ample proof that the medical and dental inspection and subsequent treatment of our children has improved their health beyond our expectations.

If, when the war is won and labour and materials are fully available, the same energy is put into the attack upon disease and its causes as has been put into the war for freedom, we should shortly achieve conditions the District should be justifiably proud of.

HOUSING.

Apart from the addition of four agricultural houses to the District, the housing position shows no improvement since my last report. It has not worsened much for the Military call up has been of young men, mostly single, who, when they have been replaced at all, have had their jobs taken by girls. The general conditions of workers' dwelling-houses is not much worse than in 1939. Repairs appear to have been carried out without difficulty. That is not to say we have not our quota of unsatisfactory houses or even bad houses. The war suspended the housing programme, and we must be content with what we have until house building and re-conditioning can be recommenced. The selection of sites for new houses is proceeding, and preparations are in hand for an early start as soon as conditions allow. The survey of the houses in the District is dependent upon the return of our Officers now serving in the Forces, for the two we have are more than fully occupied with the general work of the District. Additional duties are continually being allotted to our Officers, amongst others, the inspection of buildings for the issue of Essentiality Certificates which must accompany application for permits from the Ministry of Works. These works must then be followed up for the preparation of reports to the appropriate Ministry, and all these small jobs in the aggregate take up a large part of our Inspectors' time, especially in a district such as this where a large part of the day must be spent in travelling.

OVERCROWDING.

The position as regards overcrowding changes but little. There are a few cases, but they are in the main caused by persons marrying and staying with their parents or other relatives. There are not houses available for the newly weds, and in the case of Service men, they usually wish their wives to remain at home until their return. When more houses are available, the question will be easily solved, for our people are not prone to overcrowd in the way that some city dwellers are. There were several instances of this in the height of the evacuation when it was found that though ample space and bedding were provided, it was impossible to persuade the visitors to use it, and all slept in one bed as they had been used to doing in their own homes.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Laboratory Facilities.—The Public Health Department of the West Riding County Council have adequate laboratory facilities which are always available.

Ambulance Facilities.—

- (1) Infectious Cases. A motor ambulance is provided.
- (2) Non-infectious cases. Motor ambulances are available.

Mortuaries.—The mortuary at Pateley Bridge is a recent construction and comprises a waiting room, a reception room and a room adequately equipped for post mortem examination.

Arrangements have been made with the Ripon City Council for the use of their mortuary in Skell Bank for cases which occur in the north eastern portion of the district.

Treatment Centres and Clinics.— Those available for the District are situated in Harrogate and Ripon, and cases are directed appropriately.

Hospitals.—Public and Voluntary.

- (1) Ripon and District Cottage Hospital.
- (2) Ripon Institution Hospital.
- (3) Harrogate General Infirmary.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Looking back over the year 1944 one is astonished how the various services have been made to function as well as they have, for there has been very little complaint from the public or from the service people as to the sanitary services provided. Despite a fairly dry spring and summer, water has just lasted out even in places which often suffer from drought. The sewage disposal works have been well maintained, and the collection of refuse has certainly been a credit to the two contractors who have come to the Department for support in keeping and getting men to carry out the job. Despite changes and men unused to the work, it has been done efficiently.

WATER.

The varying character of the District reflects upon the supplies of water available, for the subsoils and lower strata show gravel, fine sand, millstone grit, shale, clay, limestone, red sandstone and admixtures. Thus, whilst North Stainley draws its supplies from wells less than 20 feet into fine sand, Bishop Monkton has a water supply from 120 feet into limestone, and neighbouring Markington derives its supply from a drift formation lying above the limestone. Littlethorpe has wells in both clay and gravel giving very different waters. Warsill has springs of moderately soft water in fine white sand on the hillside. Pateley Bridge is supplied from both sides with totally different waters. In addition to these and other sources, there are the trunk mains of Leeds, Harrogate and Ripon passing through the area carrying upper moorland water and some supplies are taken from these. The public supplies are of excellent quality, and the bacteriological reports over the last few years show that there has been no pollution to an extent as to necessitate the closing of a supply. Good progress is being made to give Darley a pure and sufficient supply of water, and the borehole which the Council decided to sink has been a great success. Ample water of good quality has been procured, and a scheme for supplying parts of the parish not previously possible has now been put in hand. This is very necessary as the water supplies to Darley, which were not all publicly owned, were very unsatisfactory. Difficulty has been experienced in obtaining reports upon water samples as

both the Analyst and the Bacteriologist who handled the Council's work have been called to the Services. Arrangements have now been made for the examination of samples. Twenty-two bacteriological samples from various sources have been examined, including two from Darley, which were returned as unsatisfactory.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Beyond keeping the sewers and disposal works functioning to the satisfaction of all concerned, it has not been possible to do much that is needed. The provision of piped water supplies to all villages, after the war, will create a demand for improvement or new sewer systems. I know the Council is mindful of these matters, and is preparing a comprehensive programme for post war improvements.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

The reduction of man power and the difficulty in maintaining or renewing vehicles has not lessened, but the Contractors for the collection of refuse appear to have surmounted their difficulties in a very creditable way. Very few complaints have come in from house-holders regarding the collection of refuse. You will be aware that only the thickly populated parts of the District receive this service, and it would be beneficial to have a survey made to consider extensions which may be desirable.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

There are passing through your District the Rivers Nidd, Skell, Laver and Ure, and their several tributary streams. These watercourses, although some of them provide power for factories and mills, are very clean. There is no industry where large quantities of waste of a character likely to cause pollution are produced. The effluents from all sources which are discharged into the rivers and streams are carefully watched by the Officers of the West Riding Rivers Board, and they work on very cordial terms with the Council's Officers.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The number of privy closets in the District is 1504. This number is fairly large when one considers the number of places which are sewered. There are a great number of outlying farms and cottages where no other system is possible, but there are also cases where there is both sewer and water supply where privy closets, many with open middens, predominate. As soon as conditions allow, I propose to ask for a survey to be made of these inconveniences with a view to the conversion of as many of them to water closets as is possible.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

There has been no necessity to take any action on this account during the year.

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

The people of your District are to be congratulated upon their good sense in taking all possible precautions against their children having this disease. Practically 100 per centum of children of school leaving age are immunised, and the majority of those available for immunisation under school age are dealt with. We have had help from the Press, School Teachers, District Nurses, Health Visitors, and others, for which we are thankful.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The District has been very fortunate in having very little notifiable infectious disease. Only thirty cases have been admitted to the Hospital during the year. All premises where infectious disease has occurred are inspected, and every endeavour made to trace the source of infection, and to prevent spread of disease. Disinfection of premises, furnishings and clothing, are carried out by an Officer of the Joint Infectious Diseases Hospital, where facilities are available for steam disinfection.

SCABIES.

The District is now practically free of scabies. Only very occasional cases, apparently imported into the District, are found, and we trust that the more settled condition we are all hoping for will bring back the pre-war conditions when we were able to report "Scabies—None."

SHOPS.

Apart from the town of Pateley Bridge, there is no concentration of shops in the area. Those shops at Pateley Bridge are of a more specialised kind, and others throughout the District are village stores. Most of these are serviced by the shopkeepers themselves, and there has been nothing to bring to your notice following inspections under the Shops Act.

SCHOOLS.

It would appear that the new Education Act should give the opportunity for a much-needed improvement in schools. There are some of our schools which, by reason of position, construction or lack of necessary amenities are not at all the buildings which should be housing the rising generation. If we wish to lead the civilised world after the war, we must see to it that pleasant, well lighted, brightly decorated schools are provided, hot and cold water must be on tap, together with modern sanitary conveniences. It is possible that the lack of these desirable conditions accounts for many of the complexes we hear so often of nowadays, and it would be better to give our children the best environmental conditions during their school years than leave them to be treated later in life by psychologists and psychiatrists for trouble they could have been saved during the most receptive period of their lives.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.

In spite of labour shortage and other adverse conditions, there has been no increase in the number of cases of milk of poor keeping quality which have been reported by the Dairy Advisory Officers. In almost every instance, it was found upon investigation, that water shortage was the primary cause of the trouble. Many hill farms are watered by small springs which are not of sufficient capacity or not so constant as to provide at all times of the year a supply for adequate milk cooling. Generally the milk producers know their job well, and are keen to avoid milk being returned to them owing to its sour condition.

The West Riding Agricultural Committee's Officers co-operated with your Sanitary Inspectors in this work which has proceeded smoothly throughout the year.

Number of Milch Cows kept.....	6,537
Total number of gallons of milk produced per day	9,846
Gallons of milk sold wholesale per day	8,495
Gallons of milk sold retail per day.....	529
Gallons of milk used for cheesemaking	1
Gallons of milk used for buttermaking	88½
Number of cowsheds in which Milch Cows are kept ...	1,025
Number of registered cowkeepers	694
Number of registered retailers	64
Number of registered wholesalers	275
Number of T.T. licences.....	14
Number of Accredited licences	33
Number of Pasteurisation Plants	2

MEAT AND FOOD.

The amount of food condemned as unfit for human consumption during the year has been very small. It has been confined to a few pieces of bacon and ham which were reported by the retailers on account of decomposition, and some canned goods which were found to be "blown." Such of this food as was suitable for salvage has been directed thereto.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION.

The ploughing out of large areas of land appears to coincide with an increase of the rat population, and the Council's Rodent Extermination Officer has been kept busy. As private dwellings are interspersed with farm-houses and agricultural land and buildings, it has been difficult to differentiate between the non-agricultural rat and his opposite number on the farm. However, co-operation between all authorities responsible for rodent destruction has been the rule, with excellent results accruing to all concerned. The Officers of the Rodent Control Section of the Ministry of Food have expressed their satisfaction with the condition of the Council's tips and other properties.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. A. FLINTOFF,

Medical Officer of Health.

